

Your Honor,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Darren Payne whom has confessed to some serious charges within your courts. My name is Neil Crass, I am a Pastor and own a Construction Company in Roane County. I have known Darren and his family for 30+ years and im very familiar with his story. He has been brought up in a loving Christian family and has been an active part of our church his whole life. He has always been a good kid and young man(not perfect by any means) but still a descent person. Darren was smart and athletic and wanted to do good growing up and even when he was older you could see his desire to do well for his family and his self. He went back to school and earned a BS degree so that he could teach kids and help his community. He would talk to me about wanting to make a difference.

Some where along the line he started taking pills (prescribed) for a back injury and it seems he went down from there. I have a man who worked for me for 20 years. He is one of the best trim carpenters i have ever seen. He is so talented and smart He can build beautiful stair cases and anything you can imagine. Always on time always wanting to work and do a good job. He hurt his shoulder and a doctor started throwing pills at him. He to went down a dark path and once the pills stopped got into heavier drugs. He was sitting in my truck weeping saying i stopped drinking, and stopped smoking and never had a problem but he said I cant kick this, i dont want to be like this but its like it wont let me go. It breaks my heart what can happen to these individuals that go down this path and I cant imagine the things that you have to see and deal with in your position.

Im not saying Darren is innocent, he definitely made some bad choices and needs to face the consequences. But if there was ever a young man that has great potential to be a success story he is it. He has a great family and support system around him, he knows what he needs to be and what he needs to do. He just needs a path to help him get there. Whether thats jail time and rehab or community service teaching kids the results of bad decision or all of the above. Your Honor I just wanted you to know his story to better help your decision. I will be praying for wisdom and guidance for you and your associates. Thank you for all you do and the great weight that you carry on a daily basis.

Blessings,
Neil Crass

